

Sign language interpreting for the deaf gay community from the perspective of the interpreters and their consumers.

Profoundly deaf people are a linguistic and cultural minority in Britain, largely because of the use of British Sign Language (BSL) as a first or preferred language by many of them. A strong deaf identity is formed as a result of the use of BSL and the relationship between language and identity and the impact this bears on a deaf persons' life, was examined as a considerable proportion of my recent masters degree by research.

However, the focus of the research was the identity, culture and language of the deaf gay male community in Britain. These men represent a subgroup within both the deaf and gay communities and they will potentially use a linguistic variation of BSL known as Gay Sign Variation (GSV). This acts as a further identity marker for them, as members of the deaf gay community.

The use of BSL and GSV paired with English, displays multilingualism in professional settings and social interaction. As a result, a large proportion of the community will rely on a substantial amount of support by means of the provision of a sign language interpreter. This presentation will explain the relationship between the deaf gay community and the interpreters they work with, as well as highlight the complexity of the interpreters role, when undertaking assignments with the community.